

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 7-12, 19, and 20 are pending. Claims 1-6 and 13-18 are canceled. Claims 7 and 19 are amended to incorporate the features of the base claims and all intervening claims. Support for the amendments can be found in the claims as originally filed. No new matter is added.

Applicants do not concede that the originally filed claims are not patentable over the art cited by the Examiner, as the present claim amendments and cancellations are included only to facilitate expeditious prosecution. Applicants specifically traverse the assertion that claim 1 is obvious in view of *Applicant's Admitted Prior Art* in view of *Peters*, U.S. Patent 4,999,766, as this rejection is fundamentally flawed. Thus, Applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue these and other claims in one or more continuations and/or divisional patent applications.

I. Allowable Claims

The Examiner indicates that claims 9-12 are allowed, and that claims 7 and 19 are allowable if the base claims and any intervening claims were incorporated into claims 7 and 19. In response, Applicants have amended claims 7 and 19 accordingly. Hence, claims 9-12, 7, 8, 19, and 20 should now be in condition for allowance.

II. 35 U.S.C. § 103: Asserted Obviousness

II.A. Claims 1, 3, 5, 13, 15, and 17

The Examiner rejects claims 1, 3, 5, 13, 15 and 17 in view of *Applicant's Admitted Prior Art* and *Peters*, U.S. Patent 4,999,766. This rejection is moot with respect to the current application, as Applicants have canceled these claims.

Nevertheless, this rejection is respectfully traversed on the grounds that the combination of references, considered together as a whole, does not teach or suggest all of the features of the claims, and that the Examiner failed to state a proper reason to combine the references to achieve the legal conclusion of obviousness – for the reasons presented in the prior response to office action. The Examiner's rebuttals in this Final Office Action are not persuasive.

II.B. Claims 2 and 14

The Examiner rejects claims 2 and 14 in view of *Applicant's Admitted Prior Art*, *Peters*, and *Farrand*, U.S. Patent 5,559,958. This rejection is moot with respect to the current application, as Applicants have canceled these claims.

Nevertheless, this rejection is respectfully traversed on the grounds that the combination of references, considered together as a whole, does not teach or suggest all of the features of the claims, and that the Examiner failed to state a proper reason to combine the references to achieve the legal conclusion of obviousness – for the reasons presented in the prior Response to Office Action. The Examiner’s rebuttals in this final office action are not persuasive.

II.C. Claims 4 and 16

The Examiner rejects claims 4 and 16 in view of *Applicant’s Admitted Prior Art, Peters*, and *Harrington*, U.S. Patent 6,480,958. This rejection is moot with respect to the current application, as Applicants have canceled these claims.

Nevertheless, this rejection is respectfully traversed on the grounds that the combination of references, considered together as a whole, does not teach or suggest all of the features of the claims, and that the Examiner failed to state a proper reason to combine the references to achieve the legal conclusion of obviousness – for the reasons presented in the prior response to office action. The Examiner’s rebuttals in this Final Office Action are not persuasive.

II.D. Claims 6 and 18

The Examiner rejects claims 6 and 18 in view of *Applicant’s Admitted Prior Art, Peters*, and *Walter*, U.S. Patent 6,847,615. This rejection is moot with respect to the current application, as Applicants have canceled these claims.

Nevertheless, this rejection is respectfully traversed on the grounds that the combination of references, considered together as a whole, does not teach or suggest all of the features of the claims, and that the Examiner failed to state a proper reason to combine the references to achieve the legal conclusion of obviousness – for the reasons presented in the prior response to office action. The Examiner’s rebuttals in this Final Office Action are not persuasive.

III. Conclusion

The Examiner indicates that the currently pending claims are allowable. Therefore, the subject application is patentable over the cited references and should now be in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number if in the opinion of the Examiner such a telephone conference would expedite or aid the prosecution and examination of this application.

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Respectfully submitted,

/Theodore D. Fay III/

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